



THE KING'S SCHOOL

25 March 2020

Dear Student and Parents/Carers,

As I have made reference to in previous communications, we are currently working through an unprecedented situation in which difficult decisions have had to be made at all levels. I appreciate that from an educational point of view, you and your parents/carers have been affected the most and I thank you once again for your patience and understanding. As you will appreciate, we are still awaiting clarity on a number of issues and any significant changes will be communicated to you as soon as is practical. I do hope that you feel 'in the loop' and that communication between you and the school has been strong and informative.

Can I take this opportunity to specifically address your parents/carers: In a very uncertain time, I am sure of one thing; our current Year 11 students will progress and be highly successful in whatever they choose to do. From a personal point of view and only seeing their development from mid-way through Year 10, I have been amazed by their resilience and maturity when faced with a situation that many adults are struggling to comprehend. We are proud of them and I send my thanks to you for supporting the school and making it a pleasure to work with them on a daily basis.

I would like to address a number of issues that I am sure you are considering and would like some clarity on.

GCSE Grades/2020 Exams

As we are all aware, all summer formal qualifications have been cancelled and students will not sit GCSE exams. I feel it necessary for you to know that as a school, and especially with regard to your year group, we have made massive strides this year. I was genuinely excited at the prospect of the results we were to receive in August. That said, I sympathise with how you are all feeling and the disappointment at not having the opportunity to showcase your talents. However, it is absolutely both my responsibility and that of the school to ensure that you are awarded the grades you deserve and have worked so hard to achieve.

I paraphrase sections from the article (link below) but it is encouraging to see the rationale in awarding grades to revolve around giving students grades which fairly reflect the work they have put in and allowing students to be able to move on to the next stage of their academic career without hindrance. Whilst we believe that grades will be based on teacher assessment, there will be a number of considerations, such as the national context. It is likely that these calculations will be out of our control but we will strive to have as much input as possible for the benefit of all students. It is also likely that if students are not satisfied with their calculated grade, there will be an opportunity to sit an assessment at a later date or a potential appeal available.

Please refer to the guidance provided in the press release from the Department for Education (DfE) published by the Education Secretary on 20th March. Any updates or further information we receive will be communicated with you in due course.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced>

Home/Online Learning

From this week, all Year 11 students have been set work to complete in preparation for GCSE exams. As you will appreciate, the planning for this started some time ago where it became apparent a school closure was likely. We were in a position where content was already covered and the work was focused on revision. Our recommendation is that students should continue to access the resources and complete work on areas they feel would need development. We have made the point to you that this learning should be lifelong learning and not merely for formal exams. Also following the guidance from the DfE, there is a possibility of an exam in the future should students wish and we would view this as potential preparation. Crucially, work will still be set for vocational subjects as it is likely we will still need to submit coursework in order to ensure the most accurate grades possible. This work absolutely should be completed as a priority.

Whether it be through Show My Home Work (SMHW) or Google Classroom, teachers will respond to queries the students may have and do our best to support whilst school is closed. You may want to request extra work in subjects you intend on studying next year.

In addition to the above, we know that colleges etc. are being flexible in their approach and we will be in discussions with our main partners to look at the possibility of 'bridging' work or a project that would allow a smooth transition to Key Stage 5. I would encourage you to invest time in researching the courses you have applied for and complete some additional reading to put yourself in as strong a position as possible in the not too distant future.

Leavers Celebrations

I sincerely hope that the last five years has been an enjoyable experience for all our students and The King's School should extend beyond purely academic achievement. Whilst we have not had the opportunity to facilitate the 'normal' style of leavers events (Prom, shirt signings, leavers assemblies) etc. We will endeavour to schedule celebrations in due course and give you all the send-off you deserve.

I would like to thank you once again for your co-operation and helping us to manage the issues that have arisen in recent days and weeks. Your support is appreciated and I will communicate any further information if necessary.

Please take care and stay safe and I look forward to seeing you in the near future.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Pinto', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Mr D Pinto
Head of School